Dear Katie,

It's that time of year again. The time when the activities of the holidays - decorating, shopping, parties, travels, and sending off packages - fill our days and evenings and weekends. For most of us, these activities also fill us with warmth and joy.

Unfortunately, though, drugs don't take a holiday: drug deals still get made - perhaps during a holiday party - and precious family resources get spent on drugs instead of presents. Caregivers strung out on drugs continue to neglect and abuse their children. For these children, home is not a safe place or a joyful place, and the holidays aren't much fun.

Children know when their parents are focused on their well-being and when they aren't. At some level, they know when their parents care more about drugs than about them. Imagine, as a child, trying to make sense of that during this holiday season.

If you're reading this, you are a part of a growing national network of folks working hard to diminish the number of children who don't get to enjoy the holiday season because of their parents' involvement with drugs. We are so grateful for your commitment. It is reflected in the wonderful developments we saw in 2011:

- We provided training to hundreds of law enforcement officers, child protection workers, prosecutors, judges, probation officers, medical personnel, treatment providers, and other professionals on how to work collaboratively to help drug endangered children
- Our monthly professional development webinar series continues to grow in popularity
- We have 10 additional states interested in joining our community of state DEC alliances
- Our current state DEC alliances are developing more and more promising practices to support local DEC efforts and provide better outcomes for children
- Practitioners across the country are challenging themselves to do more to help.

As this calendar year comes to a close, we thank each of you for the
incredible work you are doing to make a difference in the lives of drug endangered children. Your dedication will pay off not only for the children you help today, but for the children you save from becoming drug endangered in the future.

We look forward to doing more good work together in 2012, and invite you to catch a glimpse of what's happening now:

- **Meet Betsy Dunn**, a practitioner and valued member of our hardworking DEC Leaders Network
- Review the latest additions to our A to Z Resources Library
- Check out the upcoming webinars in our monthly professional development webinar series
- View other trainings and events that may be happening in your neck of the woods

From all of the staff and board members at National DEC, we wish you a warm and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Chuck Noerenberg
President, National DEC

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### Updates to Online A to Z Resources Library

National DEC’s **A to Z Resources Library** now has more than 850 resources to help you in your work, including articles, research reports, protocols, collateral materials, and more!

Here are just a few of the two dozen new resources we've added this month:

- **On-scene safety information for first responders encountering a meth lab** (Connecticut Department of Public Health)
- **Prenatal tobacco, marijuana, stimulant, and opiate exposures: Outcomes and practice implications** (Minnes, S., Lang, A., and Singer, L.)
- **The DEA position on marijuana** (Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice)
- **Trauma exposure in American Indian/Alaska Native children** (BigFoot, D.S., Willmon-Haque, S., and Braden, J.)

As a reminder, we also post the recordings of our popular monthly webinar series on our website as well, on the **Training Downloads** page.

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### DEC Leader Spotlight: Betsy Dunn
This month, the staff of National DEC is proud to introduce you to another member of our esteemed DEC Leaders Network: Betsy Dunn.

Betsy is a Child Protective Services Investigator in Putnam, Jackson, and Clay Counties in Tennessee. She has been employed in this capacity since 1989, specializing in the investigation of severe cases involving sexual abuse and physical abuse of children. Since 1999, she has been involved in numerous cases involving the severe child abuse of children that were living in homes where a methamphetamine lab was found.

“I was about 8 years of age when I figured out what I wanted to do with my life,” Betsy says. She remembers being horrified to learn from the news that a little girl had been beaten repeatedly by her parents and subsequently died. After hearing the tragic story of that little girl, she told herself that when she grew up, no child would ever hurt that like that again. “So, here I am,” she says, “doing a job that I love, just trying to give back and pay it forward. I truly believe that the good Lord placed me on this earth to do what I am doing.”

Betsy loves public speaking and, since 1992, has provided yearly child sexual abuse in-service training for local law enforcement, public schools, boy scout groups, day care centers, medical professionals, and numerous other organizations that serve children. She often assists the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department in educating the public on methamphetamine awareness and drug endangered children, and has presented at several conferences and workshops around the country, including the 2009, 2010, and 2011 National DEC conferences. She has also presented a webinar for the National DEC monthly professional development webinar series.

A strong advocate for children in dangerous drug environments, she was invited in 2005 to testify before the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources in regard to “Fighting Meth in America's Heartland: Assessing the Impact on Local Law Enforcement and Child Welfare Agencies.” In 2006, she spoke at a congressional briefing to examine the impact of meth on foster care, children, and families. She has also appeared on ABC World News and CNN discussing the effects of methamphetamine on children.

Currently, Betsy is an ex officio member of the Tennessee Governor's Methamphetamine Task Force. She also serves as the chair of the Tennessee Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and the co-chair of National DEC’s First Responders working group. As co-chair, she was instrumental in developing the “Do You Suspect a Drug Endangered Child?” fact sheet to help law enforcement and social services identify DEC.

Betsy earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology and an associate’s degree in criminal justice from Tennessee Technological University. Outside of work, she loves to travel and has recently taken up Zumba fitness (“I love it!” she says). She also loves to spend time with her wonderful family and friends, including her eight nieces and nephews, whom she says are the apples of her eye.

Thank you, Betsy, for your passion and your service. We couldn't do it without you!

**Upcoming Webinars**

*An Overview of Bath Salts and Other Synthetic Drugs from Law Enforcement and Medical Perspectives*

Date: Wednesday, December 14, 2011
Time: 11:30am - 1pm (mountain)**
Speakers: William Benson, Trey King, and Dr. Sullivan Smith
REGISTER NOW

**PLEASE NOTE: This will be a special 90-minute presentation

**Breaking Through Barriers: Connecticut’s Collaborative Response to Children and Families**
Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2011
Time: 11:30am - 12.30pm (mountain)
Speakers: Lieutenant Edward Gould, Wayne Kowal, and Sara Wilhelm
[Registration opens 1/4/2012]

**Defending Childhood Initiative**
Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2011
Time: 11:30am - 12.30pm (mountain)
Speakers: Phelan Wyrick
[Registration opens 2/1/2012]

National DEC provides these webinars at no charge to you and your colleagues working to improve the lives of children living in drug environments. We are dependent upon the generosity of individuals like you in order to offer these exceptional learning opportunities. Please consider how your gift will help us continue to provide the highest quality of training services and resources available. Click here to make your tax-deductible donation.

Your Neck of the Woods: Training Opportunities & Events Near You

National DEC is going on the road! In the coming months, we'll be presenting or training at various events around the country:

- **February 22-24, 2012**: Youth, Justice and Community Conference 2012 - Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
- **February 29, 2012**: Southern Illinois Criminal Justice Summit 2012 - Effingham, Illinois

Be sure to check out our Training Conference Calendar for details about other upcoming trainings!

As always, if you'd like someone from National DEC to present at your event and conduct a training for your organization, send us an email at info@nationaldec.org.

What about you? Do YOU have something interesting happening in your neck of the woods? Maybe a Fun Run happening and you want to spread the word? How about an upcoming town hall meeting where DEC issues will be discussed?

As always, email us at info@nationaldec.org and we'll get your event posted!